



## White Mountain National Forest Christmas Tree Gathering



It's winter in the White Mountains! Come enjoy the snow and the crisp clear air in your National Forest. Cutting your own Christmas tree can be an exciting time for the entire family. Imagine how folks did it in the old days – bundle up, make a lunch, bring your handsaw or ax and look for that special tree. Remember, while a wild tree may not have the perfect appearance of a commercial tree, it will create memories of a special time together.

You will need a permit to cut any Christmas tree in the National Forest. You can purchase your permit for \$5 at any White Mountain National Forest Office. These are located in Campton, Lincoln, Gorham, and Conway, NH.

### Choosing a Tree

Several different types of evergreens grow in the White Mountain National Forest. Many people prefer the balsam fir because of fragrance and needle retention. Others prefer the spruce because of the fullness of the branches and the classic shape. Fir and Spruce are the most common species used for Christmas trees.



**Please remember:**

- Trees are for personal use only, not for resale. Each family may cut one tree per permit.
- Use only hand tools to cut Christmas trees. Chainsaws are not permitted.
- Make sure you are on National Forest land. Respect the rights of landowners when crossing private property.
- Do not cut trees in or near; campgrounds, picnic areas, Experimental Forests, Wilderness, active timber sales, or within 100' of a state highway. Ask if there are any known "off limit" areas.
- Do not cut trees larger than 8" in diameter at chest height. Pack down limb piles low enough so they are within 2' of the ground. Scatter limbs and wood at least 25 feet away from roads, streams, hiking trails, and property boundaries.
- Cut your tree so remaining stumps will be less than 10" in height.
- Tree tags may be used as temporary Recreation Passes. Place the tag prominently on the dashboard while searching for a tree. Once the tree is at the vehicle, the tree must be tagged before transporting.

**Caring for your Tree at Home**

Once home, you'll need to give your tree proper care to keep it fresh and attractive and to keep your home safe throughout the holiday season. Keep the cut tree in a bucket of water in a cool, shaded area, which is sheltered from the wind until you are ready to set it up. Trim an inch or two off the bottom of the trunk just before putting the tree in its stand to allow the tree to take up water once its moved inside. Your tree will be very thirsty, so take care to check the water level in the stand often - at least two hours after you set it up and at least once each day. The water level should always be above the bottom of the tree's trunk. Your tree will keep its needles longer and be more fire resistant if it is kept watered.

Remember to place your tree as far as possible from a fireplace, radiator, television set or other source of heat or electricity. Avoid decorations that burn readily such as cotton or paper or wax candles. Check lights and wiring for worn spots and cracks and take care not to overload electrical circuits.

After the holidays, think about recycling your tree – what about a potpourri of balsam needles to remind you of the holidays throughout the winter? Or set your tree in a snowbank to create a playground for the chickadees and nuthatches in your backyard.

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